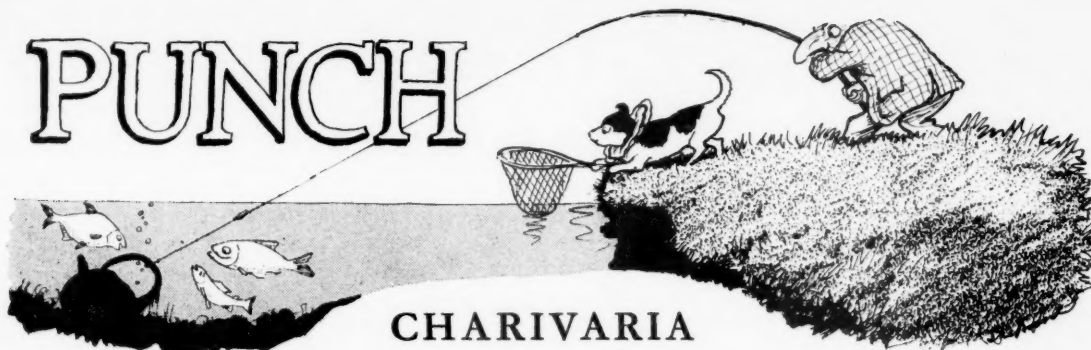


PUNCH



CHARIVARIA

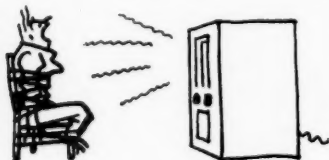
REVELATIONS of World War II bungling in high places have been streaming so fast off the presses that the public has practically given up wondering who won the contest and how. Even the recent indictment, by Admiral Barjot, of British lack of preparedness, reluctance to move against the enemy and misinterpretation of battle intelligence hardly raised readers' eyebrows—until they realized that the Admiral was referring to last autumn's campaign in and around Port Said.

According to Form . . .

ADMIRERS of Mr. Dulles are crowing over his recent scouting of retirement rumours with the assertion that "his personal plans for the next three and a half years were to be Secretary of State." Others are confidently waiting for him to take this back.

Long View

AN interesting sidelight on the Gallic temperament is the report that taxpayers of Trouville have presented their



retiring income-tax collector with a television set. In this country we usually let bygones be bygones.

Like Old Times

LAMBETH'S "Workrooms for the Elderly," which exist to instil a sense of usefulness into the old folk, report soaring orders as local firms find that they "turn out just as good work as younger men and women." Social

workers elsewhere are full of admiration—chiefly for the clever psychology in the next part of the plan, when the old people will have a chance to enjoy a rejuvenating nostalgia as they fight through the trade union pickets to their workroom gates.

Can Be Seen on Request

ON the suggestion that Handley Page's Victor was the first bomber to pass the speed of sound there was a



quick comeback from Avro, pointing out that their Vulcan had done the trick "on a number of occasions." Naturally, no one doubts anyone's word on this, and such competition in the industry is an excellent thing, but in future both companies would be advised to start a reference file of testimonials about shattered glasshouses.

Keep the Changes

REPORTS that British Railways dinners are going up once more were eased a little by the official statement that it was not really a question of charges going up but of "the provision of a better and more varied meal." Passengers hope that improvements of this kind will be as infrequent as possible.

Mighty Atom

FEARS that the Atomic Energy Authority would become top-heavy with administration were put at rest with the recent announcement that precautions for the public safety are to be simplified. These will now be administered by a

Safety Branch, in which a Safety Executive Committee acting on recommendations of the Health Advisory Committee will sanction recommendations from specific reactor sub-committees and refer them to the Reactor Safety Research Committee, being served by the Reactor Safety Committee and the Ancillary Establishments Safety Committee and able to call on the Reactor Research Committee (acting as a Technical Committee of the Research Group) and the Health Panel composed of Chief Medical Officers and Chief Health Physicists.

Incentives Wanted

THE seamy side as entertainment slumped into an old field the other evening when B.B.C. Television, aided by the Birmingham police, brought cracksmen, petty thieves and other convicted criminals to the nation's screens. One critic complained that "there was no clear suggestion that crime does not pay"—but when the artists received their cheques they at least realized that it doesn't pay much.

Still a Surplus

DESPITE intensive and inspired publicity by the producers, and the Minister of Agriculture's recent admission that nine million gallons had been poured



away in the last six months, efforts are still being made to find new methods of milk disposal. A competition at St. Albans "Dairy Week" will seek to find "who can drink a pint of milk in the quickest time."

DD

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Bang Went a Billfold

EVER-increasing speeds of passenger transport, says an aeronautical correspondent, mean that the "day trip" to New York may be a reality sooner than had been hoped. Meanwhile, the £100 dollar allowance has arrived, and should suit nicely.

Enemy of Conversation

LORD MANCROFT's visit to North Uist, South Uist and Benbecula, says the Ministry of Defence, enabled him



to examine the well-known rocket project scheduled for those areas and so plan to eliminate "any undesirable social consequences." This is thought to be the neatest euphemism yet for the effects of guided missiles out of control.

Screen Test

WORKERS for peace, whose hopes have lately been pinned rather insecurely on the atomic deterrent, sensed a sudden brightening of horizons after Mr. Khrushchev's popular television appearance and the subsequent discussions on whether or not Mr. Eisenhower should enter the lists in competition. In an age which deplores old-fashioned patriotism but retains a fierce partisanship over its sitting-room celebrities, it would clearly be ideal if international differences could be settled by viewer polls on a worldwide network. To-night, Colonel Nasser; tomorrow night, Mr. David Ben-Gurion; next day, viewer-ratings electronically laid before the Security Council, and the winner announced by Mr. Hammarskjöld. The responsibility on the protagonists would be heavy—though not more so than on any old-fashioned Chief of Staff. And the only bloodshed would be among a handful of angry rival claimants to the best system of audience measurement.

O.B.E.s

FIRST-through-the-barrier airman,
Gallant, ungarrulous, gritty.
Redoubtable deputy chairman
Of Manchester Savings Committee.

THAT WHICH WE CALL A ROSE

NO doubt it is fairly easy to find a programme for a new political party in British Guiana; "Man," exclaimed a citizen during the last elections, "I'd vote for a broomstick as long as it was black." The new People's Independence Movement, though, shows more originality than most. Not only have they taken over from South Africa (a dominion which the Guianese on the whole are unlikely to find sympathetic) their proposal to abolish the British National Anthem; they will also invite the electorate to vote for them on the issue of changing the name of their country to El Dorado.

You can see that, once the British element has been extracted, the old name won't do. There would be too much risk of confusion with that other newly-independent state across the Atlantic. So, after the example of Ghana, which is named after a great city that once flourished four hundred miles beyond its northern borders, the party has chosen the name of a great city that probably never flourished at all, but, if it did, flourished on the shores of the imaginary Lake Parima among the head-springs of the Orinoco (in Venezuela or perhaps Brazil).

Unless, of course, the newly-independent state is to be called after El Dorado in Saline County, Illinois (population 4,482) or El Dorado in Butler County, Kansas (population

10,000) or El Dorado in Union County, Arkansas (population 15,800), none of which seems very likely.

If by any strange chance the People's Independence Movement should be returned to power at next August's elections, instead of the P.P.P.—and, as we have seen in Canada, no one party can hope to have things their own way for ever—it will be interesting to see what effect the sudden incarnation of El Dorado will have on other territories newly liberated or expecting to be so.

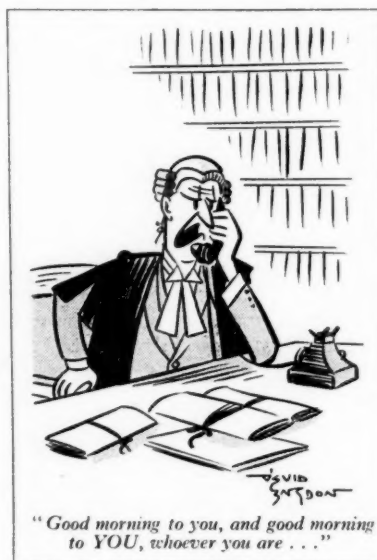
The West Indies might well celebrate their federation by adopting the new name of Atlantis. After all, West Indies is a rather misleading name, when you come to think of it. True, there is not much evidence that Atlantis lay where the West Indies now are, if it lay anywhere at all. Some authorities even think it was in Scandinavia. It doesn't matter, no one else is competing for the name, and it will give the Federation a ready-made history which it can soon assimilate, and a sense of power and prosperity well worth cultivating, even if it is derived chiefly from science-fiction.

Malaya has nothing quite so conveniently to hand. Possibly they might make do with Shangri-la, which is at any rate in the same hemisphere. There is no lost continent nearer than Mu, which is underneath the Pacific and in any case will probably be wanted later on for some other free state with a prior claim. Though Mu isn't much of a name for a great new nation, and as a matter of fact wasn't much of a continent anyway. The Atlanteans are credited with the invention of the flying saucer, whereas the Muans, or whatever they were, never got as far as the Kontiki.

On the whole the best thing will be for the new nations not to worry about geography but simply to select the name they think suits them best. Cockaigne has a good, prosperous ring about it, and Utopia is absolutely splendid until you stop to think that it is Greek for "nowhere." Then there are Arcadia (Cyprus, perhaps?), Elysium, Thule, Valhalla, all waiting for little bits to flake off the British Commonwealth and adopt them.

But what aspiring world-power will elect to be known as Eden?

B. A. Y.





MR. GOMULKA. "WOULD YOUR EMINENCE BE KIND ENOUGH TO EXCOMMUNICATE ME? I MAY BE GOING TO MOSCOW."

CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI. "WOULD YOUR EXCELLENCY BE KIND ENOUGH TO ARREST SOME OF MY BISHOPS? I MAY BE GOING TO ROME."

Awful When You Think of It

By GRAHAM GREENE

WHEN the baby looked up at me from its wicker basket and winked—on the opposite seat somewhere between Reading and Slough—I became uneasy. It was as if he had discovered my secret interest.

It is awful how little we change. How often in the street an old school acquaintance, who has not seen one since forty years ago when one occupied the neighbouring chopped and inky desk, detains one with his unwelcome memory. Even as a baby we carry the future with us. Clothes cannot change us, the clothes are the uniform of our character, and our character changes as little as the shape of the nose and the expression of the eyes.

It has always been my hobby in railway trains to visualize in a baby's face the man he is to become—the bar-lounger, the gadabout, the frequenter of fashionable weddings: you

need only supply the cloth cap, the grey topper, the uniform of the sad, smug or hilarious future. But I have always felt a certain contempt for the babies I have studied with such superior wisdom (they little know), and it was a shock last week when one of the brood not only detected me in the act of observation but returned that knowing signal, as if he shared my knowledge of what the years would make of him.

He had been momentarily left alone by his young mother on the seat opposite. She had smiled towards me with a tacit understanding that I would look after her baby for a few moments. What danger after all could happen to it? (Perhaps she was less certain of his sex than I was. She knew the shape under the nappies, but shapes can deceive: parts alter or fail, operations are performed.) She could not see what I had seen—the tilted bowler and the

umbrella over the arm. (No arm was apparent yet under the coverlet printed with pink rabbits).

When she was safely out of the carriage I bent towards the basket and asked him a question. I had never before carried my researches quite so far.

"What's yours?" I said.

He blew a thick white bubble, brown at the edges. There could be no doubt at all that he was saying "A pint of the best bitter."

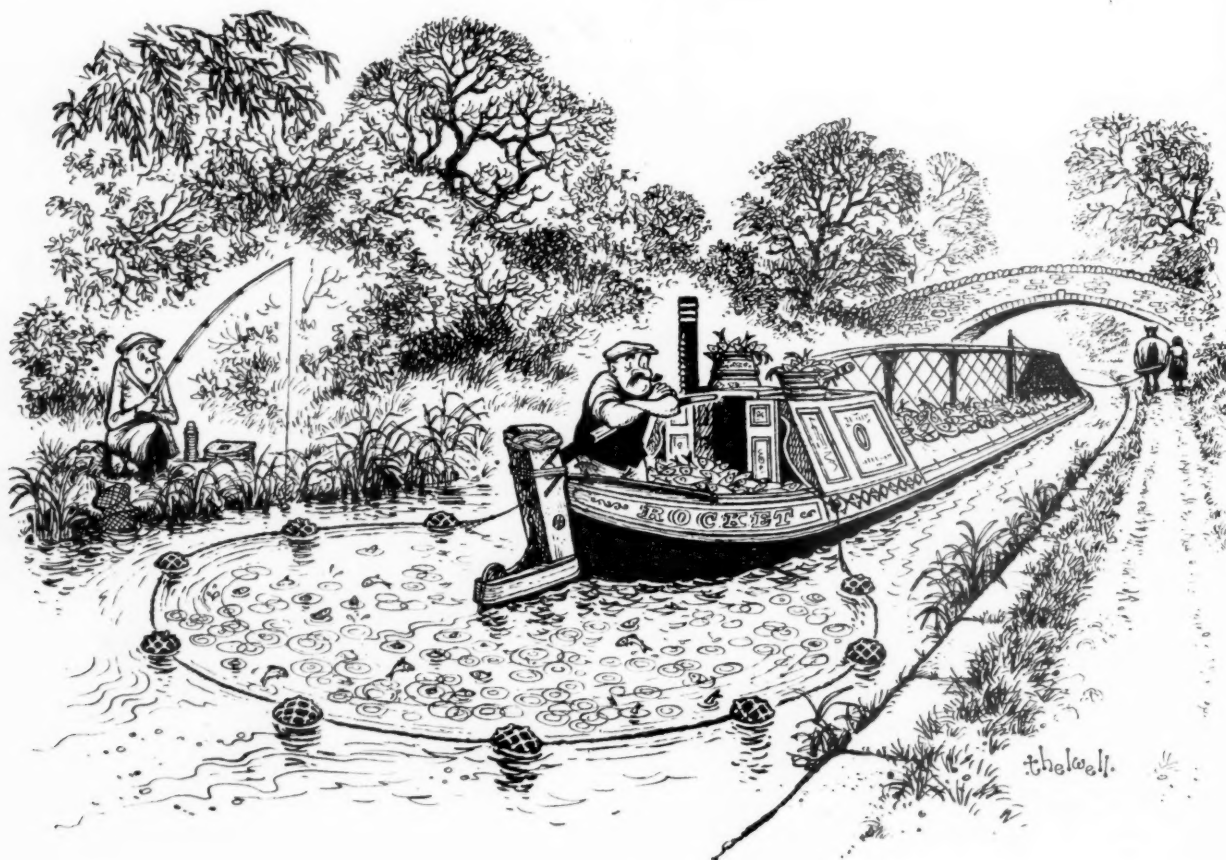
"Haven't seen you lately—you know—in the old place?" I said.

He gave a quick smile, passing it off, then he winked again. You couldn't doubt that he was saying "The other half?"

I blew a bubble in my turn—we spoke the same language.

Very slightly he turned his head to one side. He didn't want anybody to hear what he was going to say now.

"You've got a tip?" I said.



Don't mistake my meaning. It was not racing information I wanted. Of course I could not see his waist under all those pink rabbit wrappings, but I knew perfectly well that he wore a double-breasted waistcoat and had nothing to do with the tracks. I said very rapidly because his mother might return at any moment, "My brokers are Druce, Davis and Burrows."

He looked up at me with bloodshot eyes and a little line of spittle began to form at the corner of his mouth. I said "Oh, I know they're not all that good. But at the moment they are recommending Stores."

He gave a high wail of pain—you could have mistaken the cause for wind, but I knew better. In his club they didn't have to serve dill water. I said "I don't agree, mind you," and he stopped crying and blew a bubble—a little tough white one which lingered on his lip.

I caught his meaning at once. "My round," I said. "Time for a short?" He nodded.

"Scotch?" I know few people will believe me, but he raised his head an inch or two and gazed unmistakably at my watch.

"A bit early?" I said. "Pink gin?"

I didn't have to wait for his reply. "Make them large ones," I said to the imaginary barman.

He spat at me, so I added "Throw away the pink."

"Well," I said, "here's to you. Happy future," and we smiled at each other, well content.

"I don't know what you would advise," I said, "but surely Tobaccos are about as low as they will go. When you think Imps were a cool 80/- in the early thirties and now you can pick them up for under 40/- . . . this cancer scare can't go on. People have got to have their fun."

At the word fun he winked again, looking secretively around, and I realized that perhaps I had been on the wrong tack. It was not after all the state of the markets he had been so ready to talk about.

"I heard a damn good one yesterday," I said, "a man got into a tube train, and there was a pretty girl with one stocking coming down . . ."

He yawned and closed his eyes.

"Sorry," I said, "I thought it was new. You tell me one."



Hewison

And do you know that damned baby was quite ready to oblige? But he belonged to the school who find their own jokes funny and when he tried to speak, he could only laugh. He couldn't get his story out for laughter. He laughed and winked and laughed again—what a good story it must have been. I could have dined out for weeks on the strength of it. His limbs twitched in the basket: he even tried to get his hands free from the pink rabbits, and then the laughter died. I could almost hear him saying "Tell you later, old man."

His mother opened the door of the compartment. She said "You've been amusing baby. How kind of you. Are you fond of babies?" And she gave me such a look—the love wrinkles forming round the mouth and eyes—that I was

tempted to reply with the warmth and hypocrisy required, but then I met the baby's hard relentless gaze. "Hands off, old man, hands off."

"Well as a matter of fact," I said, "I'm not. Not really," I drooled on, losing all my chances before that blue and pebbly stare. "You know how it is . . . never had one of my own . . . I'm fond of fishes though . . ."

I suppose in a way I got my reward. The baby blew a whole succession of bubbles, he was satisfied; after all a chap shouldn't make passes at another chap's mother, especially if he belongs to the same club—and suddenly I knew inevitably that he would belong—in twenty-five years' time. "On me," he was obviously saying now. "Doubles all round."



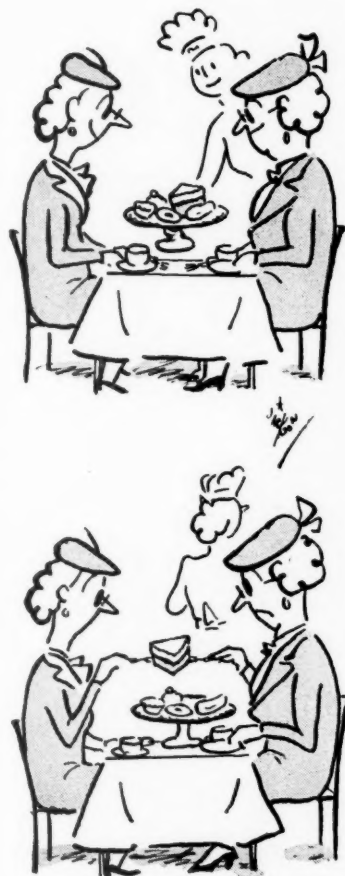
Tallulah Talking*

SIT here, darling. Or, better still, over there. Would you like to draw the curtains? Shall we have another light on? Perhaps you can see all right, though. I must look dreadful. I'm still in bed because of last night. Stood for hours on the reception line, shook hands with hundreds, all for the something-or-other fund. You know I had a smashed right hand, don't you darling? The surgeons took a steel pin out of it only a month before I came over here. Miss Bankhead won't play *The Rustle of Spring* any more, we fear. Halfway through I thought my right hand was bleeding inside my glove and daredn't look to make sure. So I changed over and shook with my left. This is the smile I used, the very same. It's frozen on me. I've been trying all afternoon to claw it off. A small pneumatic pick might help. What are you going to drink, darling? Let's ring for Cyril. Cyril is divine, exactly like an envoy extraordinary. Where's the bell push? I always have to fish under the bed for it. This hotel is a divine place. Everything at your finger tips and you can find nothing when you want it. I came here as a girl in 1923 because it was the only hotel I had heard of. You don't mind, do you darling, if I put my legs out of bed and swing them? Do you like dogs? For weeks I refused point blank to come over to the Café de Paris because of my neurotic little dog Doloras. Not Dolores, darling: Doloras. Sleeps on nothing but pillows, hair like spun sugar, quantities of it; you see nothing but her nose. It takes four hours to groom her. A zephyr blew her into my swimming pool once. Light as fluff. Whenever I left her she was unhappy. She *shook*. But in the end I found a dog-sitter whose Id has a matching shade, so I was able to leave Doloras in New York with an easy mind. The dog-sitter keeps me posted. Doloras is taking her morning coffee on her cushion in the kitchen and is marvellously placid. I couldn't have settled in at the Café if she'd been moody. You weren't at my first night? Or my second? No? I'm pleased about that. Never fall between stools, darling. I usually say Don't fall between stool pigeons. I'm the Mrs. Malaprop of the world. My nerves were screwed tight.

I was too tense, the mike was wrong, my lower voice sounded blatant and harsh as it always does if the mike isn't just right. From the third night the mike was friendly and warm. Divine audience last night: smart, quick, aware people, the kind of people I like best of all. Do you know, if my life depended on it I couldn't tell you the date I opened at the Café. If it was a hanging matter, well I'd just have to hang, darling. I've never remembered a date yet. When's Thanksgiving? When's the Fourteenth of July? Let me think of some more nevers. I've never seen the sights, not even the Statue of Liberty or the Empire State Building, not even out of a window. I've never been out alone in my life; always had somebody with me when crossing the street—otherwise I'd be sure to get lost. When I bought my first motor-car in London I had to hire a taxi to lead me back home. In New York I never go out. I never go to a theatre. When I'm sixty (and that's going to happen any minute now, ha-ha!) I shall have a hundred and eight dollars a month for life, so I shan't retire at all. I've always been insecure. No sense of owning. No sense of money. I've always been honourable about money, though. Yes, I suppose I *have* earned a lot. But I've always been in a sweat about it. I don't live high on the hog when the crops are good. If I'd been able to I'd have retired years ago. I can't say I'm particularly interested in the stage. Or in life. Don't run away with the idea I've got a Death Wish. But I don't like to have to cope with anything. I like old ways. I'm afraid I haven't gone along with the times. I don't like to go out either for work or for pleasure. I like to sit at home and have people come to me, be able to say, Darlings I'm tired, I'm going to bed. I don't turn them out. They just stay along in my bedroom, talking by the fire. Hedonist, that's me. What is a hedonist, by the way? Is there a horse called Hedonist running in the Gold Cup? If so I'll back it. I always back horses psychically. So *this* is the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Well I can just about lift it, which is more than can be said for the *New York Times*. *One who regards pleasure as the chief good or proper end*

of action. So that's what "hedonist" means. It isn't me at all. I'm one of those other animals, a person who believes in nobody bossing anybody. Not a theosophist, not a homeopathist. I've got it: anarchist. That's what I am, an anarchist. And a Southerner. When Daddy and his friends came up from Alabama as young men to start a brokerage office in New York (they had a crystal ball and called themselves The Atlantic Charter) they were always pawning rings and freezing to death. It's the South, you know, that makes me talk so. Constitutionally I can't stop talking. It's not me. It's my background, my upbringing. Southern women are awful. As my Aunt Louise used to say, they can't keep their mouths shut. They chatter like a lot of magpies. People shouldn't blame me. They should blame the bloody place where I was brought up.

*... and Charles Reid listening.



Job for Tony

By CLAUD COCKBURN

The Old Farm,
Rowing,
Rutland.
June 15

DEAR SIR GEORGE,
I am afraid our congratulations on your getting the Chairmanship of the Drains and Culverts Board are rather belated—we have been in France for a fortnight and of course foreign newspapers never seem to tell one the things one's really interested in.

Harry says I shouldn't pester you for advice at a moment when you must be

up to the eyes in the new work. But I *do* know how strongly you feel about how England needs youth and initiative and so on in industry, and I don't want to see an opportunity go to waste. That is why I am writing to ask what advice as to his next step we should give to my nephew Tony, who has just returned from Canada after more than eighteen months' work there and in South America. He is an enterprising lad who was determined to learn the hard—or at least the practical—way, and in quite a short time (it seems only a few weeks

since he last stayed with us), has gained first-hand experience of the way a wide range of things are done over there. He was, I gather, urged to stay on in Canada, but he felt that the young Englishman with that sort of experience ought to use it in our own country if possible.

Naturally I thought at once of you, and it would be wonderful if you could see Tony and "put him in the picture" as they used to say in the war. More wonderful still of course if you could use his wide experience in your Drains and Culverts thing. I believe there are drains in Canada well in advance of anything we yet have here.

Yours sincerely,
MARY HOPE-BASING.

The Old Farm,
Rowing,
Rutland.
June 15

Dear James,

As you know, I know absolutely nothing about politics, but Harry made me read your speech in the House about Juvenile Crime and so on and I must say I really honestly did think it was terribly good. I did so agree with that bit where you said that if young people go wrong it is the fault of their relations and so on who ought to have looked after them better.

I have been thinking a good deal about the problems of young people during the last few days, because your cousin Tony has turned up unexpectedly from Canada. And, I may say, he is very grateful for the help you gave with his fare when there was that wretched threat of trouble with the police just before he left.

Just at the moment, having left his job over there, he is at a bit of a loose end, and I and Harry are naturally a tiny bit worried in case he gets impatient waiting for a job and goes to London and perhaps gets into some kind of similar mess, and of course he is older and more experienced now, so I suppose the mess would be bigger too.

Of course if you could think of some job of work for him to do, even at a very small salary, and would let me know that it is open, that would keep us all clear of any unpleasantness of that kind.



Harry says aren't I being an alarmist? But I know Tony better than he does and I think there is a good deal of cause for alarm.

Yours sincerely,
MARY HOPE-BASING.

The Old Farm,
Rowsing,
Rutland.
June 15

Dear Tom,

Regard this as an S.O.S. from your sister. Treat it with no frivolity at all. Nearly the worst has happened. Our nephew—yours and mine, dear—Tony has literally flown in suddenly from Montreal or Toronto, probably with the Mounties racing to reach the airport and arrest him before he could take off, and if nobody gets him a job will stay for months and months and months like last time. Apart from his keep there is the nuisance of keeping cheque books locked up just in case, and unless we staple the dining-room table to the floor I shall expect to come down one morning and find it's been hocked in the night.

Don't sit there, do something. He has been booted, I gather, from roughly eighteen jobs in the last eighteen months all over the Argentine and Canada, and reasons for leaving them have ranged from bone laziness to stumer cheques to trouble with the age of consent. Do for heaven's sake get someone to give him a job—any job, because, if he gets an offer and refuses, Harry and I will have a reasonable excuse for getting him out of the house.

Love,
MARY.

The Old Farm,
Rowsing,
Rutland.
June 15

Dear Diana,

I won't need to tell you how glad I am about your world tour. It will be a wonderful rest and holiday for Willie. For both of you I hope, though the organizing of it all, Willie being as tired as he is, may be tiring for you.

Having written that, it suddenly occurs to me that if you by any chance felt that a sort of courier might help, I, by what may be a stroke of Providence, might be able to provide what the doctor ordered, in the shape of my nephew

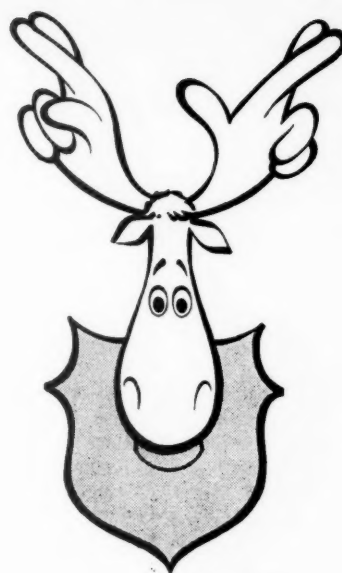
Tony. It just happens that he is back in England after eighteen months in South America and Canada, and, though he doesn't say so, rather anxious to put in a few months at something different before finally becoming what I think they call "an industrial executive." He is, of course, by now a very experienced traveller, and very knowledgeable about all the financial regulations that are such a bother nowadays. Although he doesn't boast about it, I should say he was good at meeting emergencies. Do let me know about this, which I think is a *rather* brilliant idea. Harry, the coarse-minded brute, says suppose Diana falls in love with him at sight and we are responsible? Really I think it is just that Tony is such a nice person to have around that Harry wants to delay his going.

Love,
MARY.

The Old Farm,
Rowsing,
Rutland.
June 15

Dear Mr. Pace,

I have often meant to write to thank you for your many kindnesses to us during the war, but you know how lazy and ungrateful people can be and I am afraid it wasn't until I saw a newspaper paragraph about you the other day that I remembered how very nice and accommodating you always were about the petrol and cigarettes, etc., etc. I am of course delighted to see that your new business in Tangier is doing so well. How awful that all these bureaucrats and police should be so fussy. Lots of doctors say drugs are good for people. However, I'm sure you'll win your case, and even if you don't, I can't see how they can *force* you back to England. After all,



ROY DAVIS

there is such a thing as freedom, isn't there?

Incidentally, I was speaking of you only the other day to my nephew Tony who has lived for some time in the Argentine and Canada. He expressed a good deal of interest in your kind of business, and remarked that if he had had the right kind of financial backing he believed he could have succeeded in the same line himself. Personally I believe that he might be good at it. I saw a newspaper clipping in which some Canadian policeman laughingly described him as "God's gift to delinquency." Of course it was just a joke. But if you should have an opening for him do telegraph immediately and we will repay the cost of the telegram later.

Yours faithfully,
MARY HOPE-BASING.

Lines from the Line Islands

THERE aren't so many of us, after all, living here in mid-Pacific, And we're not, I suppose, really in the forefront of the world's advance; And suppose we *had* all been blown up, well, the loss wouldn't have been terrific— Not, I mean, as if they had destroyed Birmingham or Golders Green or France.

Anyway the explosion was perfectly safe—except for anyone directly under; The fall-out is going to be slow, and dispersed for miles and miles. In fact, frankly, since it was so innocuous, we do some of us rather wonder Why they couldn't have exploded the damn thing over the British Isles.

R. H. YOUNG

Little Thelma

By VIC VALENTINE

MY news editor told me to take a large doll, donated by a kind reader, to the seaside suburb of Maroubra, and there present it to a little girl, aged nine, named Thelma, who was bed-ridden with a diseased hip.

"This is your big chance," he said.

Thelma's house was a well-scrubbed but shabby weatherboard built on sand. Her mother was a wiry, joyless woman, who greeted us wearily: "Thelma is so looking forward to seeing you, she loves reading the newspapers."

Thelma was an unprepossessing child, fat and spotty, and her nose needed wiping. In fact she was the most

repulsive-looking child I had ever seen. Her disposition was worse. She had elevated delinquency to the status of a cult.

She screamed with rage when I presented the doll because it would not shut its eyes when it was laid on its back. During the afternoon she kept harking back to the subject with snivelling remarks like "Pity it hasn't got real hair," or "It hasn't even got pants on." "I suppose they think any old doll will do for a sick girl whose parents aren't well off."

When her mother was in the room Thelma reverted to her habitual whine

and kept the poor woman on the go the whole time. She wanted her paints and her slate, another glass of water, the pillows were uncomfortable, could she have another bar of chocolate, a clean hankie, her bow was crushed. Her mother tried to wipe her nose and got a sharp slap on the back of the hand.

At first she refused pointblank to be photographed receiving the doll but later, while her mother was preparing the afternoon tea, she scowlingly gave in. She loved reading the newspapers all right.

For tea we had bread-and-butter and hundreds-and-thousands. There were



also three fancy cakes, a cream horn, a chocolate éclair and a vanilla slice.

Thelma's big eyes unwinkingly watched as she hogged her way through the bread and the cream horn and began on the vanilla slice. I faintly murmured that I could not eat another thing. Thelma slowed down perceptibly.

Just as she was about to take the éclair a spiteful urge seized me. I quickly snatched it and put it on my own plate.

"This looks so delicious that I've changed my mind," I said.

The child watched me for a few moments. Then she said levelly: "You're eating my cake."

Thelma's mother protested ineffectually about Thelma having had two and me not having had any.

"Mum, you know I always save the best for last, that's why I always eat my vegetables first," she said reproachfully. "The éclair was the cake I really wanted, that's why I was saving it for last."

Her victory was complete and overwhelming. But before we left I did manage to salvage something from the debacle—a Dunkirk on a very tiny scale.

Saying good-bye, with my back to her mother, I leaned over and about two inches from Thelma's nose I made the ugliest face I knew how. Thelma screamed, genuinely for once, that I was making devil faces at her.

I looked at her mother with wounded dismay and surprise.

Her mother shrugged in admission for the first and only time that her daughter was incorrigible.

I returned to the office filled with high-minded indignation and a naïve passion for the truth. I wrote my interview much as it had occurred.

The news editor sent for me.

"What's this tripe you've written about little Thelma?" he demanded.

"It's true," I said, "she was awful."

"If we printed that we would lose fifty thousand readers. No story is true that loses a newspaper fifty thousand circulation," he said. "And what do you mean she's awful? She's a little cripple girl. She has had years on a bed of pain. She may never walk again. And you say she's awful."

In scornful disbelief he began reading from my copy.

"She whined! Her eyes glittered!



Pudgy! Guts! We can't use that word in our paper. Now you sit down and get this straight, sonny; little cripple children in our paper, in any paper for that matter, don't whine, not ever."

He crouched over his desk and half-cupped his hands together as though he were warming a balloon of rare brandy.

"Little cripple children, especially girls, whisper. They're not pudgy, not even plump, they're frail and slight as if a breath of air would blow them away. And their eyes shine. With tears. But there is a tremulous little smile on their lips." The repeated use of the word "little" seemed to have a poignancy which escaped me.

He snapped out of his trance. "Now go and do it like that and no more nonsense."

I sat down to re-do my story appalled at such wicked cynicism. I'll give him brave little cripple, I thought, as I launched on a mawkish sea of sickening fulsome exaggeration.

Her courage in the face of overwhelming adversity became something to marvel at. When her eyes weren't shining they were blinking back the tears. When she wasn't blinking back the tears she was smiling through them. Her frail little shoulders shook with sobs beneath the sheets.

I dwelt on her shining courage, her fortitude keeping despair at bay, the unquenchable spirit in that wasted little frame. I even had her pitiful little hand brushing away beads of perspiration from her forehead as she whispered "thank you."

To my utter and overwhelming astonishment my effort, instead of being given the bird, was hailed as a minor masterpiece. Gifts flooded in for little Thelma. I became the recognized expert in the Human Interest story. Waifs, orphans, reunited lovers, lost animals and children, the poor, the sick became my speciality.

Thelma's fame became something to marvel at. She had reached the pinnacle as the living symbol of sublime courage. It became the habit for Sydney newspapers in their editorial columns to contrast the baseness of other sections of humanity with the peerless perfection of little Thelma's character.

My paper was supporting a £50,000 cancer fund. Subscriptions were slow until the community were shamed by a shilling subscription from Thelma which was put at the head of the list. I rang up Thelma's mother suggesting Thelma make the donation out of her own pocket money.

The mother came back to the telephone.

"Thelma says yes, but she says for you to put it in and she'll owe it to you."

I actually saw Thelma again when

she was cured. It was a big newspaper event to be able to record how "she could run and skip and play once more just like the other little girls."

No more staring wistfully out of the window at the other children at play. One other newspaper besides my own mentioned how she was going to buy her first pair of dancing shoes.

The change in Thelma was beyond belief. She had literally become the creature of my first published interview. Even physically. She looked as one imagines Margot Fonteyn looked as a child.

Thelma's mother gave me a huge welcome. "Thelma has never forgotten you," she said.

"I've never forgotten her," I replied.

Thelma was sedately replying to a pile of letters from well-wishers.

"People have been so kind and wonderful with their help and encouragement during all these years," she, so help me, whispered.

I wrote that down because if there is one thing newspaper readers like more than a tale of fortitude under ordeal, it is an account of their own compassion and understanding in lightening the burden.



"You sit there, Mumsie, and I'll make the tea," trilled Thelma as she danced off to the kitchen.

"Such a sweet child, always thinking of others," said her mother.

"She has changed," I said, delicately probing. But the beam of unctious playing on Thelma had blinded her mother.

"Do you still like cream cakes?" I said to Thelma with a coarse nudge in my voice, as she primly ate a soda biscuit. She smiled as if she were a nun or a performer in a passion play.

A gentle sadness enveloped our good-byes. Then I wiggled my ears, crossed my eyes and made a frightening devil's face at her.

She looked startled. Recollection flooded back.

She suddenly exploded with the most un-nunlike belly laugh I ever heard.

The Marxist Chinee

Senator ("Bret Harte") Knowland explains his attitude.

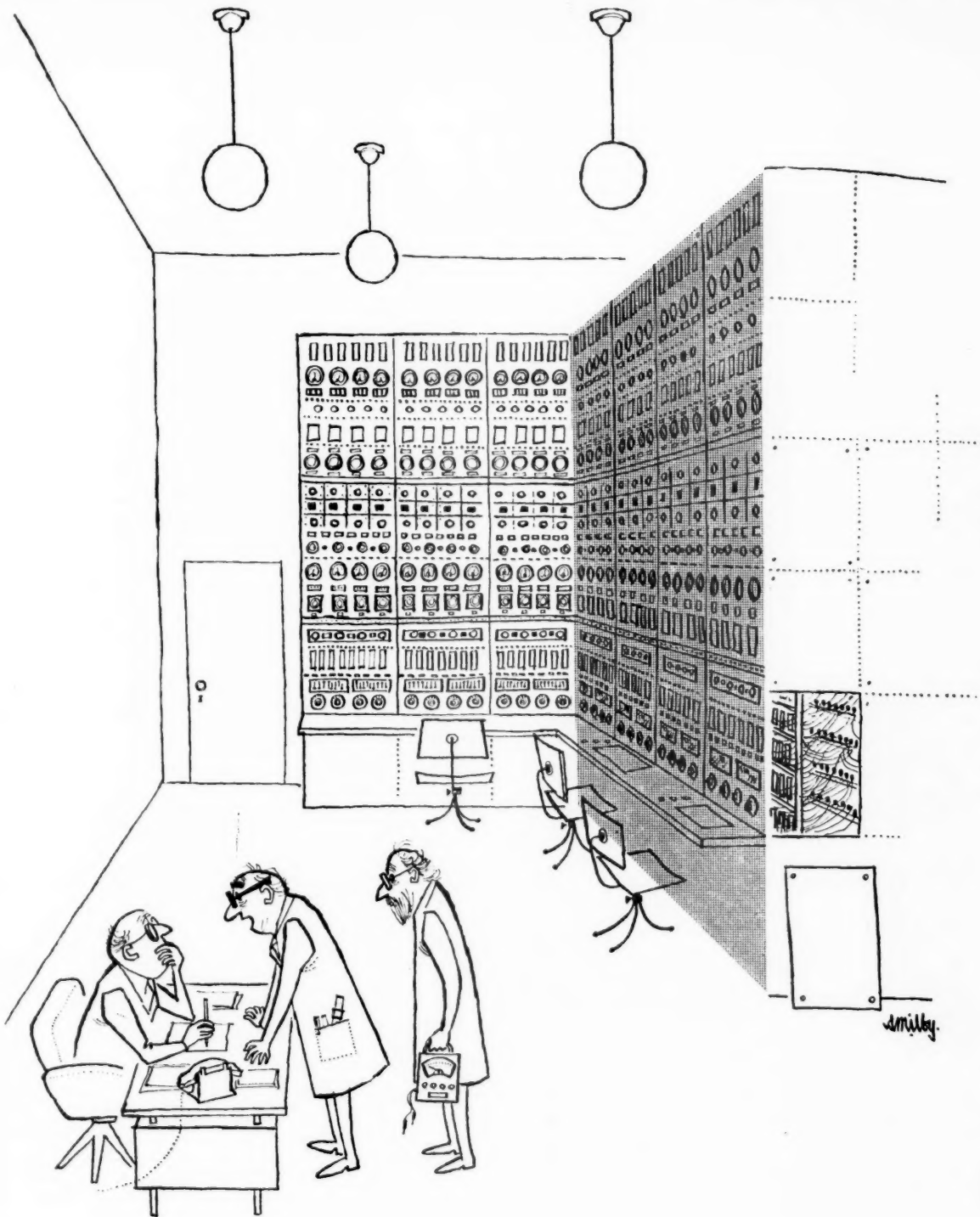
WHICH I wish to remark—
And my language is plain
That for tricks that are dark
And chock-full of chicane
The Marxist Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

South Korea is the name;
Which at last we set free.
In regard to the same
The Marxist Chinee
Incurred us some measure of anguish,
As everyone here will agree.

Which I hope explains why
I retain no soft spots
For old Mao, Chou En-lai
And the other big shots
Who hatch up, in their Communist garden,
What are common in gardens—that's plots.

Which is why I remark
That I cannot persuade
Any friend to embark
On free commerce and trade
With the Marxist Chinee in particular,
Which the same I would rather blockade.

E. V. MILNER



"I'm afraid it needs a psychiatrist."

A Box of Flies

By H. F. ELLIS

NOTHING in my experience equals the contempt with which a local fisherman will flip over the contents of a visitor's fly box. Asked to advise about a suitable lure for the district (and often without being asked at all) he stirs the flies about with a corrugated forefinger-nail, grunting a little and occasionally half lifting a

tattered specimen out of the box, as though mistaken kindness or sheer despair were going to prompt him to say that that might do. His lips are wrinkled back in mild disgust from the strong teeth clenched about his pipe, and from time to time he makes little indrawn hissing noises, very hard to bear, followed by sudden jets of smoke.



He is obviously going to be helpful in the end, probably by dredging up a couple of local flies from his waistcoat pocket and handing them over for free—but not until he has made it clear that this is the silliest set of fancy London flies he has ever had the misfortune to fiddle with. So, at least, is how I read his attitude.

My own self-consciousness about my collection of trout flies is increased, I dare say, by the box they live in. It has a gadget-like air. Made of aluminium, it is divided into twelve compartments, each with a transparent lid which flies up under the action of a spring when you press a minute wire snibber. The mere opening and shutting of these innumerable lids gives the inspecting expert ample opportunity for unspoken comment; the tinny little noise made by these townee contraptions as they snap open sounds oddly, one can see, in the ears of a man accustomed to carry his few favourite lures in an ancient leather-bound book, or perhaps a cigarette tin. My aluminium box is certainly a quarter of a century old, Hitler was a cloud no bigger than a man's hand when I bought it, yet it obstinately refuses to become decently dull or battered. It shines like chrome. A stranger handling it for the first time might easily suppose it was given me by an aunt on my last birthday; in fact that, I am pretty sure, is what strangers do suppose, very likely adding the conjecture that she told the shopman who sold it to her to put some prettily-coloured flies in each compartment while he was about it. I get a strong impression, as local experts flip the lids open and shut, that they can almost hear my aunt saying "It's for my nephew, you know. He's very keen to learn."

The truth of the matter is that nearly all my flies are local favourites, acquired throughout the years from the caps of water bailiffs and the rusty tins of fellow fishermen. Stir them about as you will, you will find no factory-made Alders and Blue Duns and Olives and March Browns. This is a specialist's collection, a real roving angler's vademecum. Their names, if ever I knew them, are mostly long ago forgotten, but each and every fly here is indispensable on the stream where I obtained it, just as all of them, from all accounts, are utterly useless on the water I happen at any given moment to be patronizing.



I don't know why I bother to take the box with me when I go fishing. It is at its best at home, with no finger but my own to prod the contents to and fro. Sitting here at my desk with the box in front of me, I can flip the lids up one after another without embarrassment and recall, if anyone has half an hour to spare, the circumstances in which each of these little treasures came into my possession.

These wispy half-dressed things for instance, with a suggestion of purple silk about the body, were given me on the Wharfe by a pleasant, youngish man (old and rheumatically now, I dare say) who caught me using a large Zulu-like fly I had had thrust on me by an innkeeper on Loch Laggan a year or two earlier. "Those are Yorkshire flies," I remember saying defensively only

last June to a Welshman who was prodding at them with silent disdain by the banks of the Cleddau, but he did not care. He gave me a practically invisible yellow fly, which I keep in my Untouchable compartment along with some nymphs from Sennybridge. These nymphs were rather a bother to me back in 1936, for I know nothing about the technique of nymph fishing and the Methodist minister who pressed them upon me was too constantly in action along the same stretch of the Usk to make it safe for me to revert to the reddish fly with orange whiskers that came to me with such glowing testimonials from an Anglican on the Lugg the year before. He himself, the Methodist, used a spinning rod mostly, which exacerbated the situation. Still, there the nymphs are in my box, enriched and sanctified

by the unimaginable touch of time.

One must not ramble on, but look for an instant at this speckled creature with the long tail. I doubt whether anything in my box has been more rudely jostled by local experts up and down the country than that fly, yet it came from the lapel of a man in gaiters on the Tavy, down in Devon, and caught four fish in three-quarters of an hour—a personal best, if you exclude the Mayfly. I do not use it now, for fear of losing it, but that is no reason why it should be flicked contemptuously aside by a Colonel on the Ribble as if it were one of a Schoolboy's Set of Six (for use on reservoirs). "That's a West Country fly," I told him, for I cannot see why a man who only knows his own fiddling stretch of river should give himself airs. But it did no good.

Forgive me if I flip one final lid. This great black hairy thing—it is as if some wartime pilot had been caught by the moustaches in a thicket and not escaped without loss—was recommended to me as a deadly killer, particularly at the evening rise, by a tall commanding angler in Shropshire. I have never used it, not knowing, to be utterly frank, whether it is meant to be fished wet or dry, nor much wishing to be seen with so strange an enticement on my line. It takes up, too, a whole compartment to itself, so that it is, one way and another, the most economically indefensible of all my flies. But I shall never throw it out. One day some local expert is going to give it an altogether too offensive prod—and the barb it hides down there in its hairy heart has to be felt to be believed.

Down to the Test with Dynamite

By ERIC KEOWN

ONE of the most alarming things about fishing is that it awakens the poet dormant—and on the evidence how mercifully—in the average Englishman. Viewed against rod and line, water seems to produce an intoxicating effect it unfortunately lacks elsewhere. In these mysterious circumstances major-generals and stockbrokers crumble quickly into pathetic shadows of Wordsworth.

As a result much fishing literature gives a totally false view of the realities of its subject, and is freely strewn with

passages in which the author, having hugely lit his pipe (his boon companion, it is often called in these circles) and momentarily ceased from his demonic flogging of the stream, falls into a maudlin ecstasy over ripples, voles, withy-beds, butterflies, celandines, beetles, church-towers, sunsets, eddies and coots. Dusk is, of course, absolutely fatal.

For instance:

"The rise being over, I sat down on the old log above the hatch, slowly filling my trusty pipe and letting myself

sink into the peace and beauty of the river. Across the water-meadows the distant clanking of a goods-train was the sole reminder of the busy world that stood outside my little oasis. The blood-orange sun, deep in the west, painted the willows grotesquely across the shimmering surface of the pool. Curlews were calling, and snipe drummed. Now and then a small fish broke the stillness with a mad leap, jumping for the sheer joy of living. After the summer heat the cool air was delicious. For a few unforgettable minutes man and the creatures seemed one. As I took down my rod I felt a new humility . . ."



Naturally little fish jump for joy when they see someone who has been pestering them incessantly knocking off for the day; but then most books in this genre subscribe to the gentleman's agreement that no one is keener about fishing than fish. Observe that in all this frothing there is no mention of mosquitos, thirst, wet feet; or of flies lost in heifers, hedge-creeping couples, village idiots or mad dogs. No mention of sudden, engulfing rage. No mention of the near-impossibility of catching fish by our traditionally oblique methods.

But if fishing books are not sullied by vapourings of this kind they usually take one of two forms, both in their ways as intimidating. One is the solidly technical, written by the sort of man who apologizes for a wasted day in which he lands only four brace of two-pounders. There is nothing he doesn't know about the awful intricacies of his obsession. He gets us firmly by the lapel, and intones:

"Wind was N.N.E., water temperature 57°F. My pocket barometer was rising steadily. Having caught a small fish and thoroughly disgorged its stomach with my fly-spoon, I decided on a pale watery dun mounted on a 00 hook, heavily sneaked, tied with a figure of 8 jamb knot to a translucent water-green 4X nylon cast. My 8 ft. 6 in. Bumbleby split-cane with reinforced ferrules may have been a trifle long for the stream, but it was perfectly balanced by my 2½ in. Humdinger reel, made of anti-corrosive aluminium alloy (plumized) with contracted drum for quick line recovery. The line, a tapered SWG 24-20-24, had, of course, been well steeped in my favourite mixture of mutton-fat and bear's grease . . ."

And so on. If any reader can follow him that far, this monster will allegedly slay a quantity of enormous fish, with the cold precision of a mechanic tightening nuts on a conveyor-belt.

In the other category we suffer from the man who thanks heaven every day for having such a sense of humour. Even in moments of high crisis he never quite throws off this affliction:

"I said to myself, 'It's time we had something tasty for the pot,' so I flopped on my tummy (don't laugh, gentle reader!) and wriggled through the rough for a recce. Believe it or not, just above me was a young whale, sucking down mayflies like an alderman tucking in to turbot! Well, I soon took the smile off his face! But no sooner was the reel rock 'n' rolling than

off he whizzed into the reeds, and got out his grappling-irons. No moment for false modesty! 'This is where we take our Friday-night!' I murmured, and peeling to the buff dove in, when I quickly got His Worship in a half-nelson. Jolly lucky during this hectic proceeding none of the village damosels took it into her pretty head to saunter in my direction!"

This is about as near as we ever get to sex in the library of fishing, with which by now you will have sensed my disappointment. England is said to be teeming with angry young men, and it is a great wonder to me that none of them has yet tapped his frustrations in a book about the darker aspects of this tantalizing aberration. How refreshing it would be to come on this:

"My knees bled from the incessant animal scrambling on all fours. My wrist ached from the futile hurling of scraps of fluff and feather to fat, insolent brutes who had seen them too often not to be openly amused, and the rain had turned my trousers to a sponge-like pulp. Festooned with gut, the trees dripped in a melancholy diapason. Like a madman I went on casting, in, out, in, out. At last a young trout, even wearier than I of the whole silly business, snatched my fly, to rush away with it and snap me easily round a sunken branch. This was the end. With icy concentration I took my rod to pieces, and snapping it across my knee, flung it far down the river. At that moment I heard a laugh, low and clear, and turning, saw a girl sitting by the bushes behind me. 'It's me, baby!' she cried, as I threw my patent reel at the nearest bullock and went slowly towards her . . ."

That may not give quite the whole of fishing, but at least it would be a healthy corrective.

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Cautionary Rhyme for Top People

"Nothing is missing from *The Times* that should not be missed." Advertisement for *The Times*.

IT doesn't mean to say it hasn't happened
Because *The Times* has given it no heed,
It's just old Aunt Haley
Of that rather pompous daily
Protecting you from what you shouldn't read.

GEOFFREY PARSONS.



Misleading Cases

Haddock v. the Arts Council of Great Britain (Before a Divisional Court)

MR. JUSTICE LARK, giving judgment to-day, said: This captivating bicker began with a polite writ of *Quere transgressit* requiring the Arts Council of Great Britain to show cause why it has exceeded the instructions and conditions which govern its existence.

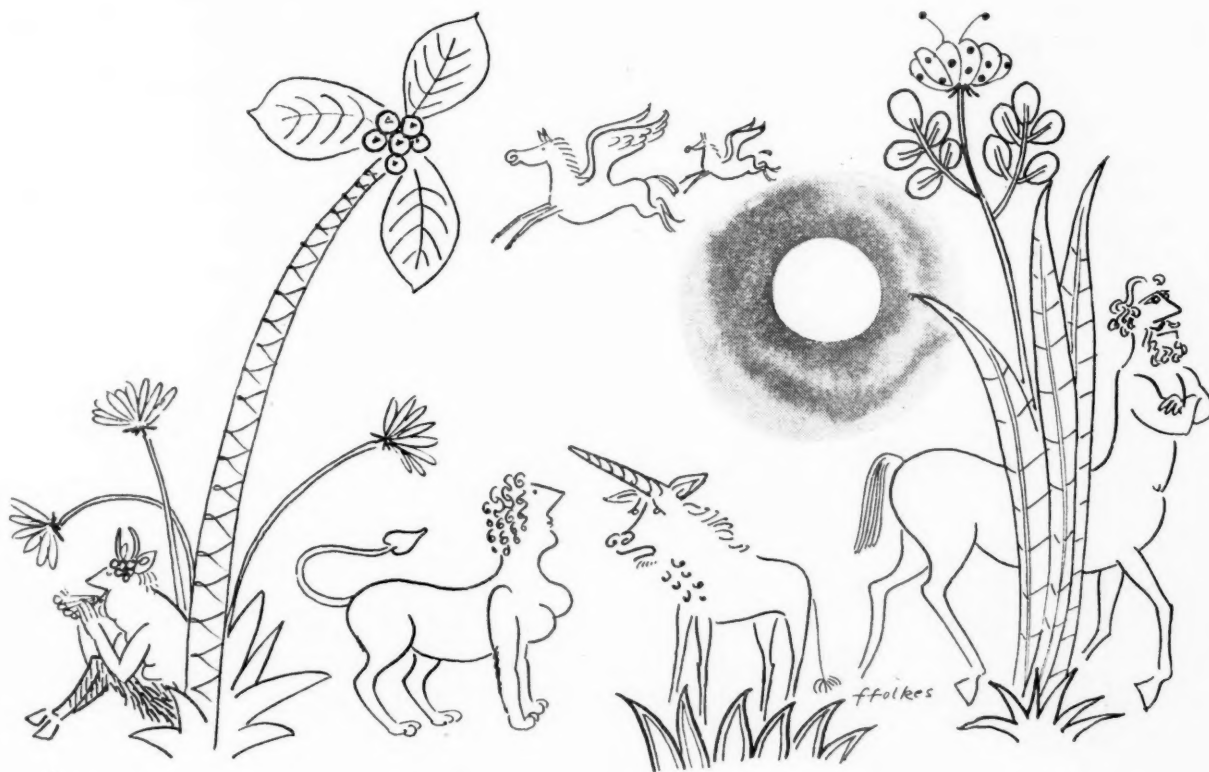
The Council was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1946 for the prime purpose of "developing greater knowledge, understanding, and practice of the fine arts exclusively." The Members of the Council are appointed by the Treasury, from which it receives an annual grant. Among other laudable activities it finances the performance of Grand Opera and Ballet at Covent Garden and elsewhere. It has also fostered, and, here and there, financed the performance of spoken, or "straight," plays, by small repertory or touring

companies. The public funds, we were told, between 1945 and 1956, contributed £1,778,000 towards the losses sustained by the Covent Garden Opera House, so that the questions raised in the case are of more than academic interest.

All went well, except the finances. Then one day, like a little April breeze, there appeared before us the patriotic and familiar figure of Mr. Albert Haddock. He contended, very plausibly, that the activities I have mentioned could not properly be described as developing "the fine arts exclusively," were therefore *ultra vires*, and indeed unlawful. Mr. Haddock's motives, whatever we may think of them, were very frankly disclosed. He has, it seems, been the author, or part-author, of numerous musical plays, many of which, though not continuously dismal,

had as sound a claim to rank as "Fine Art" as many of the musical plays performed at Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells. In none of his own plays, he admitted, does the heroine die of tuberculosis or self-inflicted wounds in the last Act: and this failing may well have raised a prejudice against him. But, in fact, not one of his works had obtained the favour of the Arts Council, or been performed with the aid of public money: and it rankled.

The question, then, that we have to answer is: "What is meant by 'the fine arts exclusively'?" The surprising thing is that it has not been positively answered before. Many years ago the project of a Ministry of the Fine Arts was discussed: but I cannot recall that anyone told us which the Fine Arts were. There is to-day a Royal Fine Arts Commission—and another, by the way,



"Sometimes I ask myself 'How long can it last'?"

in Scotland. But their terms of reference direct them, rather vaguely, to "questions of public amenity or of artistic importance," which might mean no more than the design of postage stamps, lamp standards, or public conveniences. In 1862 was passed the Fine Arts Copyright Act: but this was concerned with the copyright in original drawings, paintings, and photographs, and does not help us much. (Does photography, by the way, claim to be a fine art?) But in the Scientific Societies Act 1843 we find the very phrase which is troubling us to-day. A society may claim exemption from the rates if (among other conditions) it was instituted for the purpose of literature, science, or *the fine arts exclusively*: and here perhaps we may stumble on a clue.

At the present time, if Parliament had occasion to pass an Act concerning the

Fine Arts, we may be sure that our meticulous legislators would insert an interpretation clause, identifying the arts affected. The Parliament of 1843 did no such thing. It seems to have assumed that everybody knew what the fine arts were: and the explanation may be that at that date everybody did. This, like many of my observations, is not so crazy as it sounds. The expression "fine arts," according to the evidence, was a translation, apt or not, of the French "*beaux arts*": and the *beaux arts* were the three "arts of design"—painting, sculpture, and architecture. These, I believe, are still the only arts taught and practised at the famous *Ecole des Beaux Arts* established in Paris in 1816. (What a lot I know!) In a recent case the Master of the Rolls, a charming fellow, read a passage from the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, pub-

lished, he said, in the years 1830 to 1842—mark the date:

"The term Fine Arts may be viewed as embracing all those arts in which the power of imitation or invention are exerted, chiefly with a view to the production of pleasure by the immediate impression which they make upon the mind. But the phrase has of late, we think, been restricted to a narrower and more technical signification; namely, to *painting, sculpture, engraving and architecture*, which appeal to the eye as the medium of pleasure; and, by way of eminence, to the two first of those arts." "It appears," added Sir Raymond Evershed, "that the entry which I have just quoted was contributed by no less a master of our tongue than Mr. William Hazlitt." I could have done as well myself, I think: but here is our clue. This, I am satisfied, was the meaning of "the fine arts" when the Act of 1843 was passed: and the question is whether the courts, without further instruction from Parliament, are entitled to give it a new interpretation to-day. There are judges, it is clear, including the Master of the Rolls, who would like to do so if they had the chance. Many fiddling little societies have sought exemption from the rates under the Act, and have been resisted with characteristic tenacity and craft by the Inland Revenue. Most of the cases have been decided on other points, so that none of them has yielded a confident answer to the main conundrum. In a case of 1897 it was assumed that music was a fine art: but the point was not argued, and the authority, though accepted, is unconvincing. In the Court of Appeal there have been some liberal speculations. "I am prepared," said Lord Justice Jenkins, "to treat the fine arts as including, e.g., poetry, eloquence and music, as well as such arts of design as painting, sculpture and architecture . . . It is possible that dramatic art should be included . . . I see no justification for holding that dancing can never rank as a fine art." Lord Justice Birkett has said "I am not ready to accept the contention that dramatic art cannot be included in the fine arts . . . If for example a theatre produced plays like *Twelfth Night* I think there might be a considerable argument on the matter."

I am tempted to follow these generous gropings. But, after all, they are no more than the *obiter dicta* of much more



eminent men: and I do not feel qualified in this case to translate them into firm decisions. If I did I see that I should soon be in trouble. Suppose that I pursued the line of thought suggested by Lord Justice Birkett, I might be driven to find that *Tosca* at Covent Garden qualified as an example of fine art, but that some rancid play without music presented under the same auspices at the Arts Theatre, Bursledon, did not. But then I should be descending from the functions of a judge to those of a dramatic critic. Surely it is for the court to say whether, in general, this or that art deserves the name of fine, not whether this work or that is a worthy child of the art.

In that conviction I find that in law the words "the fine arts exclusively" have the same meaning as they had, I think, in 1843, that is, painting, sculpture engraving and architecture. It may well be that by an accident of litigation music must now be admitted as well: but that decision concerned pure music, and need not necessarily be extended to music adulterated by Italian tenors or the syrupy allurements of the ballet. Accordingly, all the activities of the Arts Council other than those I have named are *ultra vires* and must be abandoned. If I am wrong it is for Parliament to make the matter clear.

Mr. Justice Swallow: With some reluctance, for I like *La Bohème* and Margot Fonteyn, I concur.

Mr. Haddock: May it please your Lordships, I assume that there will be an order that all the public money disbursed on this unauthorized business be refunded by the Council?

The Court: Oh, Mr. Haddock, do you think so?

Mr. Haddock: Yes, my Lord.

The Court: Very well, Mr. Haddock. You are generally right. A. P. H.



How John Betjeman Kept the Bridge

"Mr. Nubar Gulbenkian has been asked to have his name included in 'Who's Who.' He has received a form asking for his personal particulars... He told me yesterday: 'I suppose they want me included because, now that my father is dead, there is a gap in the G's... I will fill in the form, of course. But I don't care very much whether they include me... Some people are born to publicity, some achieve it, and some have it thrust on them...'" —*Daily Express*

Some manage all three.

THEY held a Council meeting
Within the County Hall;
No word they bare to Chelsea's mayor,
Or Battersea's, at all.
Out spake the bold town-planners:
"The bridge must go straight down.
Its value our report condemns
In taking cars across the Thames
When driving into town"...

When the driver inches slowly
Through motor-darkened squares;
When the traffic-cop stands helplessly
In trackless thoroughfares;
With weeping and with gnashing
Still is the story told
How Betjeman saved the Albert Bridge
In the brave days of old.

T. B. Mac*ley

A la Recherche de M. Butigieg

By PAUL DEHN

IMPERVIOUS to the feeble blandishments of film-advertising in England, I constantly fall prey to it abroad. I remember being lured into a cinema at Viterbo by a poster depicting a *décolletée* female gipsy, with a bosom like an arrested waterfall, charging towards me at full tilt on a white stallion—the whole superscribed in flesh-pink capitals by the title: “LA ZINGARA APPASSIONATA.” It turned out to be an English adaptation (with Italian captions) of Barrie’s *Little Minister*. The passionate gipsy was poor Lady Babby.

Similarly, English posters failed to coax me into *Rock Around the Clock* when it galvanized the youth of London; but had I (early this February) passed the compelling façade of the Saleem Cinema in Trivandrum, Travancore, I doubt whether I could have resisted the trumpet-call of a handbill which solicited my presence at “the one and the only picture that the British Queen wanted to see *ALONE* when it was recently banned in Europe.”

One hears the quiet but firm dismissal of the Ladies in Waiting; the *frou-frou* of disappointed curtsies as they back discreetly from the Blue Drawing Room; the courteously phrased intimation to the French Ambassador that he may retire. The great doors close and the lights are lowered.

I suppose that the privilege of having issued the worst foreign handbills for the worst films ever to be witnessed by crowded audiences at the worst cinema in the world must be accorded to dear M. Emile Butigieg, who ran the Cinéma des Alliés for French and British soldiers at No. 8 Rue Negrelli in Ismailia during the First World War.

No. 8 was never actually a building. The Cinema consisted simply of a plot (which was more than could be said for the films shown there) surrounded on four sides by a canvas screen. The programme changed, in response to vigorous demand, on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Continuation of ultra sensationing films

—Dramatic— —5 Parts— —Sensationing—

—PANTHER—

Very beautiful drama, in 5 parts, of great adventurous by Mr. JACQUES DANGLARS. This film which in France had a large success with continue its triumphal success in Egypt interpreted by the famous athlet and very well-known

Mr. Mario Ausonia

Marvelous photos — — Great Succes.

—Comic— —Silly laughter—

RIGADIN AND THE GOUT

Very comic scene in loud laugh.

That was on a Sunday. By Monday (doubtless in response to vigorous demand) M. Butigieg had scrapped the whole triumphal programme and substituted:

—Comic—

—Hilarity—

IT SMELL SMOKE-PROOF

A sentimental comedy very comic
Played by the famous Italian actor
CAMILLO DI RISO

—Sensationing— —Serie D'Art— —3 parts—

Fatal Resemblance

Great emotionant and impassioned film
of a seizing verity funestely interpreted
in modern fashion by

MISS LIDIA QUARANTA as **Blanche**
MR. DANTE CAPELLI as **George** the affianced
of her — MR. WILMORE, the **Bandit** — MR.
BONAVENTURE HANEZ, the **Bankier**, father
of **Blanche**

The Fatal Resemblance of these two men constitute
the subject of the adventurous drama of multiples
& violant peripeties.

By Wednesday, M. Butigieg had discerned something fatal in *Fatal Resemblance* and was funestely regaling our troops with “CIRCUS OF DEATH: Great drama in 5 acts of a poignancy emotion. This film being superior of *The Jockey of the Death*. The dangerous situations of this magnificent film will make moan with emotion & anguish the spectators of the beginning to the end. Gross succes.”

It ran two nights and was succeeded by “FIRMLIEST THAN THE TRUTH,” which ran one.

Dear M. Butigieg! Can anyone so indefatigable, so vernally enthusiastic, have gone out of business—let alone died? Was he there, I wonder, to tempt our troops with his handbills when they stormed the Canal? After all, he was used to short runs.

§ §

Patterns of World Government

WHEN delegates to U.N.I.S.C.A.N.
Unfurled their conference flag
They noticed in their midst a man
Called Skaug, and one called Krag.

Did anybody raise a shout
Demanding who that man was?
Alas! They had their work cut out
To think what U.N.I.S.C.A.N. was.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

The Great Thinker

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

IN order to be a Great Thinker, the first qualification is undoubtedly to be old. The English, like the Chinese, reverence old age. A Parliamentary delegation once went to China. It contained very distinguished statesmen of Cabinet rank, but by them the Chinese were very reasonably quite unimpressed. But it contained also a very aged peer, and his presence they accepted as the highest of compliments. The English, they said, have sent us their oldest man.

It is so also with Thinkers.

After twenty-seven or so
The spirits lose poetic flow,

and it is much the same with philosophy. The mind by and large quits thinking. It is on the whole a mistake to do much thinking after you go down from the University. By then you have got to the time when you have your living to earn—which is a more serious business. What is essential for the rest of your life is to go on saying it again and again—that and, like the Abbe Siéyès, to survive. Then things all work out according to the normal formula. Throughout the twenties and the thirties you are an *enfant terrible*, undermining the bases of society, prepared to say anything just to get noticed. In the forties it is a good plan to go to prison for a short time, and it is at that point that the tide begins slowly and gradually to turn. Throughout the next forty years everything that you say, provided of course that you do not say anything new, is found to be wiser and wiser until in the eighties you are able on the strength of your undergraduate epigrams of sixty years before to attain to the sunny beatitude of a Grand Old Man of Thought. What fifty years before had been denounced as contradictions and confusions are now produced as evidence of breadth of mind, of catholicity of thought. When they can't think of anything else to say for it, they say that it is a joke and frightfully funny. Who in English criticism ever heard of an octogenarian being wrong?

Is this because by all your efforts you have succeeded in undermining the foundations of society and that you have produced a new society which

does really say No wherever its grandfathers said Yes? There is no way of knowing, for a Great Thinker, as opposed to a Thinker, is careful always to have two strings to his bow. A Great Thinker is not merely content to think. Did he confine himself to that, the



journalists would never hear about him. He must be able to beat the journalists and the television stars at all their own games of publicity, but behind the newspaper article and the snappy interview there must always stand the great, bulking work on Mathematics or Physics or Relativity, of which the sovereign virtue is that it is not written in words at all but in symbols and that not more than twenty people in the world even pretend to have read it. Such a work, agree the journalists, "is without doubt the greatest contribution to mathematical thought of all time. It will endure for a thousand years." What else can they safely say, as they cannot

understand one single word of it, and if they started criticising it someone might ask them what it was all about?

With a work like that behind you, with a work of which the vague impression is that it resolves all contradictions, though no one has any idea how, why, then you are home. You can then go on and say that there is no such thing as right and wrong but that all the people whom you dislike are very wicked. For what could please the journalists better than a world in which they do not have to be right but in which they are free to call the other fellow wrong? You can say that you yourself do not exist. You are only "a series of sensations." What could suit the Sunday papers better than that? You are but "a logical fiction"—and it won't make the publishers pay a penny less for your autobiography. You can say that "all human knowledge is uncertain, inexact and partial," and if a chap writes to *The Times Literary Supplement* and asks if the proposition that all human knowledge is uncertain, inexact and partial is itself uncertain, inexact and partial—well, what is *The Times Literary Supplement* for except to print letters like that? You can say that the table does not exist when you are not looking at it, but, if the table is still there when you look again and they ask you whether you really think that it did not exist while you were not looking at it, then you can say that there is a "Postulate of Quasi-Permanence," and, although they used to laugh at you and ask what that meant when you were twenty-five and could not sell a thing to the newspapers, no one dreams of asking what it means now when you are eighty-five and doing so well on the television. And of all the things about which it is important not to be quite certain none is more important than not to be quite certain whether you are an Earl or not.

Most of what you say, it is true, was all said two hundred years ago by a Scotsman called David Hume, but it is a pretty safe bet that no journalist who can hold down a job in Fleet Street will know that. After all Hume is dead. If you want to go on selling on the gimmick that you do not exist, it is essential to be alive.



Back-door Nationalization?

IN one of his more expansive and less responsible moods Mr. Macmillan has suggested that the proposed Socialist pensions fund might be used to finance new state investment in industry. This was the Prime Minister's way of saying that if the nationalization scare is dead it won't lie down, that the new Socialism of Sir Hartley Shawcross, and perhaps of Mr. Gaitskill, offers no guarantee that the threat to private enterprise is ended.

To attack the Left's "Retire-on-half-pay" policy for national superannuation in this way (when it sits up and begs for serious criticism) is, in my opinion, quite stupid, and cannot possibly help the Government in its important and extremely delicate talks on prices and wages with representatives of the unions. All the same, Mr. Macmillan has in his frivolous way indicated a line of action that a new generation of Socialists may be tempted to adopt.

The case for nationalization has always rested as much on administrative expediency as on economic and social necessity—necessity, that is, as seen by the idealists of the Labour movement. Coal could be nationalized because it was basic, because the industry was a neat agglomeration of primary producers. The railways could be nationalized easily because by their physical nature they were already monopolistic and had reached an advanced stage of rationalization. It was the same with gas and electricity. But with the steel industry state control meant the drawing of difficult lines of demarcation between producers of the raw material and consumers, between the furnaces and finishing mills, between pressers and motor-car manufacturers, between road rails and cheap tin trays.

To some extent private industry has fortified itself against the state's irresistible take-over bid by spreading its wings, by increasing the horizontal range of its activities. I am not suggesting that such protective expansion has always been inspired by fears of political gate-crashing, but the fact remains that great empires like I.C.I., Unilever, De La Rue, and Distillers no longer have their fortunes "in one bottom trusted."

The Left knows therefore that straightforward nationalization of specific industries would prove horribly

difficult and might liquidate only a fraction of the resources of those industrial units prudent enough to disperse their eggs among many baskets. It is possible then that Labour will abandon the rags and tatters of its policy for 1945, and instead seek eventual control over the giants by getting in on the ground floor, as a shareholder, and working its way up to the boardroom.

All this is of course still in the realms of fancy and fiction. So far the spokesmen of the Left have done no more than



Forgotten

IT'S odd how Socialism makes us all so much less social. No doubt Communism succeeds by destroying our sense of community altogether.

I am thinking of John Lapford. He was our village carpenter, or rather, odd-job man; for he could do anything from killing a pig to sweeping a chimney, until he retired three years ago aged seventy-five. He didn't decide to retire then; it was simply his poor eyesight made him become quite a menace with a hammer. But none of us worried over his debility. If we gave it a thought we assumed he'd got savings, and hoped he'd bought himself a pension too. We knew that we'd no need to worry on his account since the Welfare State had been especially constructed to aid the sick and the aged. Lapford would be able to get the Old Age Pension, free spectacles and, no doubt, a bottle of cod liver oil and orange juice.

What an improvement such security is on what faced Lapford's father when he retired. In those privileged days, the poor old craftsman had nothing but charity to depend on. We had a sense of obligation towards him; he had to worry whether we'd remember it. But strangely enough we used to: in those days, the vicar did visit the aged; and the squire's wife dressed up as Lady Bountiful called at the cottages at least once a week.

What a relief it must have been for our carpenter not to be dependent on

throw verbal spanners into the Stock Exchange; but it would be wise to prepare for heavier intervention. To keep alive, prove its identity and retain its façade of radicalism, the Labour movement has to find a new and exciting policy. Nationalization via the back door may well be one of the items on the next agenda.

Investors all at sea in the current stock market calm may like to take another look at "consumer durables," those gadgets which the housewife—who now wears the pants of purchasing power—seems unable to get enough of. I am particularly impressed by the profitability of Hoover, Prestige, Morphy-Richards, and Mercantile Credit (Ilire Purchase Finance). In all cases equity values should improve steadily.

MAMMON

* * *

anybody. And what a relief it was for us too, not having to worry about his welfare, knowing that he had enough to eat, a council house, and even the amenities of entertainment piped round the clock through his aerial. Indeed we knew that he was so well cared for that none of us gave him even a thought.

Consequently, John Lapford's only visitor was the postman. And he called only once a month when the old man had to sign one of his welfare forms. Lapford, with his poor eyesight, could hardly have been expected to be a prolific correspondent, especially as he hadn't any relatives. As the old man was seventy-five, the postman wasn't surprised to find Lapford dead. But it was a shock to him to observe that Lapford had been sitting there dead in his armchair for a month. A corpse staring at a TV set which is staring at a corpse is a disturbing sight. All of us can vouch that we'd have visited the old chap if we'd given him a thought. As it is, our last is that we shan't have to pay for his funeral.

RONALD DUNCAN

§ §

Spree Pending

"Touring the village on December 23, Barcombe Village Church choir raised 14s carol singing. It was divided between the Choir and Organ Fund, Pouchlands Hospital, Chailey Heritage, Princess Alexandra Children's Hospital, and Barcombe Place."

Sussex Express and County Herald



BOOKING OFFICE

"The Unfrothed Romantic"

Sainte-Beuve. Harold Nicolson. *Constable, 25/-*

IT is as if an English author, possessing the curiosity of Isaac D'Israeli, the scholarship of Saintsbury and the skill of Edmund Gosse, were to leave us forty volumes containing essays on such diverse subjects as Beattie's Minstrel, the Blickling Homilies, Mrs. Vesey, Tottel's Miscellany, the Army Manual on Sanitation, Jack of Newbury, Green's coneycatching, Wyclif and scholasticism, Adelaide Anne Procter, Drummond of Hawthornden, Lady Melbourne, Rifleman Harris, the Paston Letters, the Warwickshire coterie, Caroline Norton, Parclay's Eclogues, Jacob Tonson and the Two Angry Women of Abington."

Thus does Sir Harold Nicolson describe the scope of Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), who, if not the greatest of French critics, he justly labels the greatest guide to French literature of the nineteenth century. If being a good critic consists in marking down the contemporary names that in due course impress posterity, Sainte-Beuve undoubtedly had his blind spots. He missed Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert; Baudelaire and Verlaine. Modern French sentiment tends to be unsympathetic to him, Proust's *Contre Sainte-Beuve* charges him with imposing a blurred, artificial shape to the things of which he wrote.

Sir Harold more than once informs his reader that this book is little more than a study derived almost entirely from M. André Billy's monumental work on the same subject; and that it is his wish merely to present Sainte-Beuve to the English reader in intelligible terms, giving reasons for considering him to-day an underestimated figure. He has accomplished this task with clarity, humour and understanding. The book is that rare thing, a monologue over the dinner table of which one does not tire.

A large part of the biography is taken up by the great emotional event of Sainte-Beuve's life—his love affair with Madame Victor Hugo. This is a fascinating story from every point of view. Sainte-Beuve, as a young critic, was brought in contact with Hugo, then rising speedily to fame. By degrees he fell in love with Hugo's wife. He informed Hugo, who perhaps found the matter impossible to take seriously, or was not unwilling to have an excuse to

criticism of Sir Harold's treatment of this incident is that he does not accept the extreme contrast as in itself a good reason for Madame Hugo's fall.

What the affair amounted to emotionally is, of course, another matter. When towards the end of his life, Princesse Mathilde asked Sainte-Beuve whether he had ever truly loved a woman "he gazed in silence for a few minutes at the carpet. 'That,' he answered, 'is a box which I never open.'" There can be no doubt that an element of scoring off Hugo in this manner played a powerful part in the whole business.

It is impossible to say that Sainte-Beuve was an attractive character. He was treacherous, cowardly, envious, stingy, ungrateful, and no woman was safe from his dubious advances. On the other hand, he was deeply devoted to literature, and, when he had made up his mind that he himself was never going to be a star of the first rank, he worked like a black (if that phrase is still permissible) to produce a guide to French literature that is unsurpassed. No one who possesses a good memory and a set of the *Causeries du Lundi* need fear to be seriously caught out on that subject at the most intellectual party. Another fact should go on record. Sainte-Beuve once stood Matthew Arnold dinner at "the only good restaurant in the quarter," Pinson's in the rue de l'Ancienne Comédie.

ANTHONY POWELL



embark on the career of record-breaking amatory adventure in which the rest of his own life was spent.

The piquancy of the story lies not only in the fact that Sainte-Beuve was a critic and Hugo a poet, or that Sainte-Beuve was unsuccessful, poor and hideous, while Hugo achieved fame in his early twenties, never had much trouble in raising money, and was unusually good looking. On top of all that Sainte-Beuve possessed a physical disability which would have made a normal marriage impossible, while Hugo's physical powers were of a truly fabulous order. One is driven to the banal reflection that you simply cannot tell what a woman will like. My only

Cricket in Perspective

Cape Summer. Alan Ross. *Hamish Hamilton, 18/-*

There could be no finer consolation for the cricket spectator faced with a blank day or a bout of stonewalling than this two-in-one record of recent Tests. First, Alan Ross deals with the visit of Johnson's men last summer, interlarding description of the play with handsome little sketches of the shires and scenic milestones; then he embarks for South Africa and brings us right up to date with a splendid reconstruction of the



"Why is the blueberry pie off if the Russian salad isn't?"

winter's news from the Cape, Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth.

He writes brightly and shrewdly, avoiding the clichés of sporting journalism with obvious relish, and he has the ability—rare among cricket writers—to put the game in perspective, to see it as something less spectacular than the Drakensberg, Table Mountain and the Southern Cross. The book contains many fine photographs of the cricket, the British countryside and the Cape.

A. B. H.

Far, Far the Mountain Peak. John Masters. Joseph, 15/-

The sixth volume of the Savage family saga: over four hundred pages of full-blooded romantic melodrama, spanning two decades, from the May Week Ball at King's College, Cambridge, in 1902, to the highly-charged hero's final attempt, at the age of 40, to climb the fabulous Mount Meru. In between lie the 1914 war and an earthquake in the Punjab; the protagonist Peter Savage, D.S.O., I.C.S., has insatiable ambition and "eyes like points of ice"; he is a "daemon husband" but "not a gentleman": his beautiful auburn-haired wife Emily is, however, "a lady," though she has a child by Peter's friend Gerry whom he dominates and finally destroys by accident: but all ends happily, with Peter regenerated by failure, and M.G.M. are doubtless negotiating for the author's facsimile signature on a film contract. J. M.-R.

The Sponger. Jules Renard. Longmans, 15/-

Jules Renard is chiefly known for *Poil de Carotte*, but this novel (chosen by a jury of distinguished French writers as one of the twelve best French novels

of the 19th century) is written in a very different mood from that tear-jerking study of childhood. It is comic and satirical, admirably translated by Mr. Edward Hyams. The scene is Paris in the late nineteenth century. Henri, a young man with literary pretensions, scrapes acquaintance on a tram with M. Vernet, a business-man; and eventually gets invited to the Vernets' home. Henri proceeds systematically, though somewhat shame-facedly, to sponge on the Vernets, but, in spite of mixed feelings on the subject, cannot quite bring himself to have an affair with Madame Vernet, who has literary leanings but has never heard of Baudelaire or Verlaine. Finally the Vernets take Henri to the seaside, where he becomes involved with their niece.

It is sometimes said—with complete inaccuracy—that the French possess wit, but no humour. This book demonstrates the utter incorrectness of such a view. As the story progresses, the author perhaps loses a little of the wonderful coolness of contrast of the earlier pages, allowing the Vernets to become a shade too able to express themselves. The original illustrations (by Ch. Huard) enliven the text. They are my favourite sort of illustration, though Henri is made to look rather too old.

A. P.

Votes for Women. Roger Fulford. Faber, 25/-

The trouble is it's rather a near, sad story, and Mr. Fulford must make it jaunty and remote. Not that he is unsympathetic—far from it; and if we want

to read painlessly about suffragettes, here is as pleasant a way as any. But the light ironies are repeated, the tale drags on in a deadlock between women's leagues and Parliament, no great or remarkable figures are evoked, banners give way to stones, stones to martyrdom, and then as the anti-climax a Bill hurried through both Houses in the face of war. Militant women were no more; the Army was waiting for them.

Mr. Fulford sets out events with a rare polish and extracts the grotesque fun that is there. Militant women are funny—and terrifying. But for three hundred pages? A long essay would have kept the enamel, but of course lacked the history. That was the dilemma. Mr. Fulford's chief—and almost only—mistake was to have been born fifty years too soon. G. W. S.

British Guiana. Michael Swan. The Corona Library. H.M. Stationery Office, 25/-

The Colonial Office is very sensibly commissioning accounts of the dependent territories from established writers, who are left alone to express their own views. Mr. Swan slams pretty hard at Dr. Jagan but he slams at the right-wing too, and whenever he feels that his sponsors deserve praise he firmly gives it. The chief hope for Guiana seems to lie in the human energy that should become available now malaria is conquered. If inertia and frustration can be succeeded by a reform in the pattern of land ownership that will make it easier to develop other crops besides sugar, Guiana should have nothing to fear from entry into the Caribbean Federation.

Mr. Swan has to cover so wide a range of fact that occasionally the traveller produces something more like a Blue Book than an impression; but he does find space for odd scraps of entertaining information: the old plantation names include "Glazier's Lust" and the two favourite Guianan authors are Mr. Nehru and Marie Corelli. Mr. Swan's excellent text is amply and variously complemented by Mr. Denis Williams's drawings and many photographs.

R. G. G. P

The Cat with Two Faces. Gordon Young. Putnam, 15/-

No odder spy story has come out of the war than the inglorious record of Mathilde Carré—the Cat—an unattractive nymphomaniac who started as a leader of Allied intelligence in Paris, crossed over to the enemy and actively betrayed her friends, and then came to work for us in London, where fortunately she was treated with suspicion. Her radio transmissions during her German period seriously misled British planning; when she came to England it was in an R.N. gunboat, under the trusting eye of the Gestapo.

Courage she had in plenty, though her diary shows her an unbalanced egotist.

HEROES OF OUR TIME

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In 1949 she was sentenced to death by the French, to be released five years later. Mr. Young has been tireless in gathering the facts, which he marshals clearly in straightforward journalism, but he is apt to make a sentimental riddle of the Cat's motives, where most readers will be content to put her down a thoroughly bad hat.

E. O. D. K.

A Gallery of Women. Bernard Glemser. Macdonald, 15/-

Mr. Glemser, like the narrator of his latest novel, started life as an Englishman, later became an American citizen, and is equally at home in the idiom of either country. Pre-war London (lunch at the Café Royal; a visit to Petticoat Lane) is as vividly evoked as contemporary New York, where much of the story takes place. Most of us are burdened with at least one friend whose affection expresses itself in the form of hostile and impertinent criticism; and the influx of wartime refugees has ensured contact with the Teutonic feminine temperament, as exemplified here by the intractable but talentless Trudi, with her "Hegelian English," and the "trench-coat actress" Emmy Klim. That in real life such people are egregious bores, but under this author's expert and understanding treatment appear interesting and sometimes even sympathetic, is the measure of his literary skill. The same applies to his heroine: an American publisher's whimsical, hypersensitive wife, who calls her lover "Wobert" and once horsewhipped her husband publicly in the Harvard club.

J. M. R.



AT THE OPERA

The Trojans
(ROYAL OPERA HOUSE)

FILING in at six p.m. for the long sit (the last curtain fell at five to eleven) veteran Berlioz fanciers, always impossible to please, wondered out of their mouth corners what sort of mess Sir John Gielgud had made of the production.

There was a time when "straight" producers came breezing into Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells with new brooms, bludgeons, pneumatic drills, cement mixers and a blithe assumption that operatic choruses are as mobile and malleable as crowds on a Cecil B. De Mille set, and solo singers, even when hitting E in alt, capable of free and easy naturalism in the Elia Kazan manner. Gielgud doesn't hold with this. From the word go, or at any rate from Cassandra's and Choroebus's duet in Act I, it was clear that, so far as the soloists were concerned, he had taken his gestures from the Portland Vase and applied them with a spare eloquence that exactly fits the sublime classicism of Berlioz's music.

There were complaints that Gielgud left his chorus standing about rather. Early on they have to sing a brassy

barbaric march (not the Trojan March proper) which lurches in and out of major and minor, and undergoes surprising key transformations. Unless I have misremembered the score, this is supposed to be sung during a file-past of Trojan army leaders. To speed resetting of the stage, Gielgud and his designer, Mariano Andreu, do the whole thing statically against a frontdrop. The populace, or a sample of it, are symmetrically arranged with their toes in the footlights, looking like the Troy Licensed Victuallers' Association lined up for a panoramic photo on their annual outing. This was carrying monumentalism a little far, perhaps.

At the end of Act II the Trojan women disembowelled themselves with dignity in a fine, solid Temple of Vesta; the Wooden Horse was so big that its legs and underbelly were all we could see; in the waterfront scene Aeneas's pocket army trooped impressively up the gangplank after their leader had ditched Dido; and Dido's self-immolation at the finish was a stately affair attended by crooked sacrificial smokes.

Berlioz's salient theatre *coups* came off reasonably well, then. They would have come off much better if Covent Garden had given us a replica, near as dammit, of the Paris Opéra production in the twenties which, among its other virtues, solved the Horse problem (a gigantic head and neck towered above the Trojan ramparts) for all time.

A score whose notes are known to few and whose idiom is understood by even fewer was in the main justly handled by the conductor, Rafael Kubelik. Ironically, the places where he chose to go off the rails were the only bits of *The Trojans* which are known to every schoolboy through concert performance. The Trojan March sounded excitable and

small. Through the Royal Hunt and Storm in the Forest, which in part is the musical equivalent of a tranquil landscape in the Claude manner, Mr. Kubelik whooshed in a sports car at eighty. That he didn't wish to dally was understandable. Mr. Andreu's scenery at this point is a sodden Dingley Dell where, amid chill cavortings, the sole tree fell over, supposedly struck by lightning, though nobody would have thought it.

There is a cast as long as your arm. Covent Garden has mobilized all its principal voices and in several cases given them double duty. The surprising thing on the first night was not the margin of lapse and deficiency but how well most of the singers coped with the Berlioz ambience and, on the technical plane, with his widely spanned phrases. As Aeneas Jon Vickers, trumpet-toned and swaggering in a blue and gilt suit, is more in the picture technically than Blanche Thebom, whose Dido, though plausible at its best, tended to weaken and wobble towards the end of the more exacting scenes.

CHARLES REID



AT THE PLAY

Free as Air (SAVOY)

Dear Delinquent (WESTMINSTER)

Its the Geography that Counts

(ST. JAMES'S)

Six Months Grace (PHENIX)

IN the very best sense everything in *Salad Days*—its wit and spontaneity and sparkle—is gloriously amateur. No one expected Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds to use the same mould again, but making all allowances *Free as Air* comes as a surprise: a competent, conventional little musical no less sentimental and no funnier than the bare average. The satire that lies ready to sting, and sting sharply, in the tail of *Salad Days* is absent, and there is none of the brisk flailing of society such as we got—and packed houses are still getting—in the hair-dressing scene or the song about Cleopatra. Originality is out, leaving a mild little story of an idyllic Channel island cut off from the crudities of progress and visited by a press-hunted heiress who becomes its queen.

Eccentric islanders abound, rich in the guide-book customs that are the very marrow of folk musicals. The nephew of the hereditary ruler, a nicely gauche young man, falls in love with the intruder and wins her from a terrible racing driver who turns all the village girls upside down. The ruler himself, an addled Peacock character, finally gathers in his trembling arms the ace reporter from Fleet Street who has caused the trouble, and, romance thus thoroughly looked after, the island settles down again to its primeval sleep.

Innocent is the word, and the jokes are to match. The wooing of the village spinster, for instance, by the island's chieftain is unashamedly the low comedy



"One at a time, please, one at a time..."

of pantomime. To soften our disappointment there are at least five of Mr. Slade's tunes that will no doubt echo in the British bath, though I question if any of them has the *Salad Days* magic; and Miss Reynolds has written several charming lyrics, even if bite is entirely missing. In Denis Carey's production the islanders sing their heads off, with precision; in fact all the singing has a pleasing finish. And in Patrick Robertson's marine decorations one can almost smell the starfish. A little old-fashioned, perhaps, but then so is most of the evening.

Irony makes no demands on the acting, for nearly all the characters have honest sugar-coated hearts: Considering this prevailing wind of tenderness Gillian Lewis is commendably dry in a good performance as the heiress, and so is John Trevor as her rude island lover. Dorothy Reynolds sinks her asperity in the spinster, Michael Aldridge capers quite amusingly as the whiskered laird, and the village worthies are crisply sketched by Roy Godfrey and Howard Goorney. All the prime movers may be said to pass muster, but there is nothing very exciting for them to do.

With its alluring young crackswoman *Dear Delinquent*, by Jack Popplewell, comes a little soon after *The White Sheep of the Family*. Socially and economically it is quite madly out of date, for the dashing young man whose flat and private life are broken into drifts cheer-

fully in valeted ease on an unconditional allowance from a commercial uncle. The whiff from the world of early Wodehouse is so strong that one almost expects him to wear spats. And if this is not enough to make us blink, the detective-sergeant on the trail of a packet of jewels that dodges continually from hand to hand must be comfortably the thickest-headed ever to plod across the stage. It is a flimsy comedy, that has to repeat itself to survive, but more entertaining than it sounds, for the panic-stricken hero is taken very nimbly by David Tomlinson, whose fluttering distillation of futility brings him nearest of our younger actors to Ralph Lynn. He is pleasantly abetted by Anna Massey, as a female Raffles ruined by love-at-first-sight when at the top of her profession, by Laurence Hardy as her Irish father, outraged by this tragic break with family tradition, and by Patrick Cargill as, surely, the last of the theatre's valets.

A tightly-argued will-he-get-off murder play, *It's the Geography that Counts*, by Raymond Bowers, is stronger than its title. Crime fanatics will have their work cut out to sift the facts, as the evening develops into a game of clue-chess between an accomplished liar and an unusually perceptive inspector, with the board jogged judiciously now and then to upset the whole arrangement of the pieces. At half-time Mr. Bowers gives us his murderer, but keeps enough up his sleeve to make the rest of the game

reasonably exciting for those with card-index minds. The confident acting needed to carry so static a play is provided by John Gregson, as the elder of two suspected brothers, John Stratton as the younger—an interesting study of a neurotic, his face pouring with sweat, Liam Redmond, for the Yard, and Jane Griffiths, from the bedroom. It is all cleanly clinical; our sympathies are unscratched.

If Yvonne Arnaud can find nothing funnier for her delicious talent than *Six Months Grace*, the pessimists must be right about the state of the British theatre. This is a very ordinary, careless little comedy, acted far better than it deserves. Starting with the idea of a wife swapping places with her husband, she taking over the chairman's desk in a dried-fruit firm and he the sink in their Esher villa (a gruesome home, from the glimpse we have of its drawing-room), Robert Morley and Dundas Hamilton have thrown together a loose series of sketch situations, in which the tacking-thread remains visible. Miss Arnaud and Michael Shepley would strike sparks out of a suet pudding. Occasionally there is a brief flare-up of honest comedy, but they have to work too hard for it, gallantly supported by Molly Urquhart, Richard Caldicot and Georgina Cookson.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

A Dead Secret (Piccadilly—5/6/57), Paul Scofield brilliant as a poisoner. *Plaintiff in a Pretty Hat* (St. Martin's—24/10/56), charming light comedy. *At the Drop of a Hat* (Fortune—16/1/57), very original two-man revue.

ERIC KEOWN



Miss Catamole—DOROTHY REYNOLDS

Mr. Potter—HOWARD GOORNEY

Lord Paul Postumous—MICHAEL ALDRIDGE

[Free as Air



AT THE GALLERY

The Swing of the Pendulum

THE opening of a gallery of the calibre of the new Crane Kalman concern on the sunny side of Brompton Road may be taken as a sign that civilization is moving westward or at least forsaking the West End. The initial exhibitor, 80-years-old Vlamincck, happily still alive in France, was a friend and contemporary of the late André Derain (recently shown at the Wildenstein Gallery). As physical specimens, robust and formidable, the two men had much in common, and their careers followed much the same lines. Like Derain, Vlamincck, *avant-garde* in the nineteen hundreds, subsequently lost prestige for not going abstract. In fact both Vlamincck and Derain did what thousands of amateurs still obstinately love to do; they sat down and sketched from nature, only more skilfully and knowledgeably, and, particularly in the case of Vlamincck, with a heaven-sent gift for handling rich paint. In our topsy-turvy world written explanations of painting appear more and more necessary, but the wheel must have

turned full circle when lengthy (and informative) catalogue introductions are required to reinstate the easily intelligible Derain and Vlaminck.

Non-representational art in the right hands has redirected us to the beauty of contrasting shapes and colours, such as we enjoy in early Italian paintings. In so doing it has banished the sense of space and light and flesh (which the early Italians had not yet learned to convey). But these latter qualities are necessities to the warm-blooded Vlaminck. By sticking to his guns he has produced works of great vigour and lusciousness.

The drawn line by which Max Beer-bohm retails his lovely jokes and stories of fascinating past and present characters (Memorial Exhibition at the Leicester Galleries, closes 27 June) is modest and asenous even to the point of ghostliness. To comment that the drawings do not exist in their own right in the same way that the slightest touch by Keene or Lautrec does is not to show disrespect to this unique humorist.

ADRIAN DAINTRY



[Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison

Sister Angela—DEBORAH KERR

Corporal Allison U.S.M.C.—ROBERT MITCHUM

AT THE PICTURES

Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison
The Admirable Crichton

THIS is desert island week... but if anyone had told me beforehand that I should think more of a story of a nun and a U.S. Marine alone on an island than of a handsome new version of *The Admirable Crichton*, I should—well, I should have found it hard to believe. Nevertheless it is the fact that I did. Against all probability—apart from the reputation of the director—*Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison* (Director: John Huston) turns out to be very satisfactory indeed.

There are literally only two names on the cast list: Deborah Kerr, as the nun, and Robert Mitchum, as the Marine. The time is 1944, and the film opens as he is washed ashore on a rubber raft, not knowing whether the island is occupied by Japs or not. Warily exploring, he finds the nun sweeping off the veranda of her hut; it emerges that she has been alone there since the death of the priest she came with. She is quite placid about it; because of her complete faith, it has simply never occurred to her to worry about what will happen.

Once the simple, hard-boiled man has grasped the situation—and it takes both of them a little time—he makes himself her protector. He spears fish, he climbs trees for fruit, with her help he captures a turtle (this is a remarkably amusing episode); the Japanese come to establish a weather station, the two castaways hide in a cave, and the Marine manages to steal food from the Japs' stores; finally they are rescued when the island is taken.

It is easy to look at the whole thing cynically, identifying its thought-out commercial qualities, and recognizing the

care with which Catholic susceptibilities are borne in mind (for though the pair are mutually attracted, the nun is faithful to her vows). But no matter what the motives of the story-tellers, the film as a whole is undeniably pleasing. The acting of both Miss Kerr and Mr. Mitchum is excellent, there are several scenes of very strong suspense and excitement, and above all in sheer reproduction of scene (CinemaScope Technicolor photography: Oswald Morris) the piece is beautiful. The use of sound, too, and music (Georges Auric), is wonderfully good, from the first moments as we watch the drifting raft and hear the slight ripple of wavelets, unobtrusively accompanied by a *hesitant* musical theme.

The Admirable Crichton (Director: Lewis Gilbert) is of course done as a period piece, and most sumptuously too, with many visual reminiscences of *Tissot* and *Sargent*; but the trouble is that the dramatic values of the story, and particularly the comic values, are just as much of the early nineteen-hundreds as the clothes are. It just does not work to present in a modern way, with all the trappings of reality—notably an obviously real tropical island—an artificial fable that was designed to go neatly into acts, each with its curtain line, in front of painted wooden foliage on a stage.

It is not Barrie's fault, it is the inevitable result of fifty years of developing stage-comedy dialogue and situation, that nine-tenths of the things that should be funny suddenly jerk us back from the convincing appearance of the scene to the realization that this is after all only a charade. On his storm-tossed yacht,

Lord Loam testily says that the captain must stop rocking the boat; later, on the bridge, the captain himself says things can get no worse unless the boilers blow up—and there is a loud explosion and he adds, dead-pan, “—like that.” The fact that these are not in the original is irrelevant—they might be, they are perfectly good comedy laughs, but they don't belong in a film that tries to show us people who are apparently real and must—and the climax of the story depends on the fact that they do—feel some kind of genuine emotion. No; everybody does as well as possible, and they all look nice, but this is a film crippled by schizophrenia. One doesn't blame Barrie, any more than one could blame Shakespeare for the failure of a version of *The Tempest* photographed in CinemaScope in Bermuda.

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Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

My minority opinion is that the most interesting new one is *Lizzie*. Also in London: *The Young Stranger* (12/6/57), unpretentiously good, and *Les Aristocrates* (12/6/57), and the two fine Italian ones *The Lost Continent* (24/4/57) and *Friends for Life*. There's also *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (see “Survey,” 12/6/57), and “by public demand” *War and Peace* (28/11/56) is back.

None of the releases was reviewed here (unless you count the reissued *Gone With the Wind*, in 1941), but *Fear Strikes Out* is well worth seeing for its acting—newcomer Anthony Perkins as a young baseball-player driven to madness by the ambition of his father (Karl Malden).

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Krush Without Bulge

RATHER late in the day (and why not? 'The cold war is no seven-days' wonder.) I should like to comment on the celebrated Khrushchev broadcast from the Kremlin, filmed by the Americans and scooped for British viewers by Channel 9.

This Press conference lasted an hour and seemed longer. For practically the whole of the programme we were able to study Mr. K.'s right profile mostly in close-up. There was only one static camera on the job, and the resultant fixed-angle pictures together with the delayed-action sing-song recital of the interpreter robbed the performance of animation and made it resemble a series of stills with dubbed commentary.

Mr. K., in an off-white suit, looked like an exceptionally robust Eisenhower. He spoke quietly but truculently, looking his earnest questioners in the eye and never facing the camera. At times he was evasive in his replies, as I suppose all nuclear-age statesmen have to be, either through ignorance or diplomatic intent. He predicted the fall of Western capitalism ("Your grandchildren will live in a socialist system"), admitted that the Russians, like the Americans and the British, had been something less than expert in the sphere of international relations, and defended the puppet régime in Hungary with scalding references to Formosa.

I liked his touches of humour. On the H-bomb tests he felt that warnings, or registration, were unnecessary in a country like Russia, but common prudence in countries of limited size like the



MR. KHRUSHCHEV

U.S.A. This point he seemed to relish. The U.S.A., he said, was "comparatively small," though the twinkle in his star-board eye suggested "ridiculously small." American viewers, Texans in particular, must have found this attempt at belittlement very hard to swallow, but British viewers, familiar with the legend of Yankee aggrandisement, were vastly amused by it.

Mr. K. used metaphor rather elaborately in his attack on the "Voice of America" propaganda broadcasts to Russia, and managed thereby to fox a large number of listeners and critics. When he complained about "unmusical" sounds drifting east from NATO he was not, as many Americans and some English newspapermen seemed to think, condemning jazz, rock 'n' roll, Miss Clooney and Mr. Presley: he was merely pointing out that strident propaganda would continue to be received unsympathetically and would be jammed.

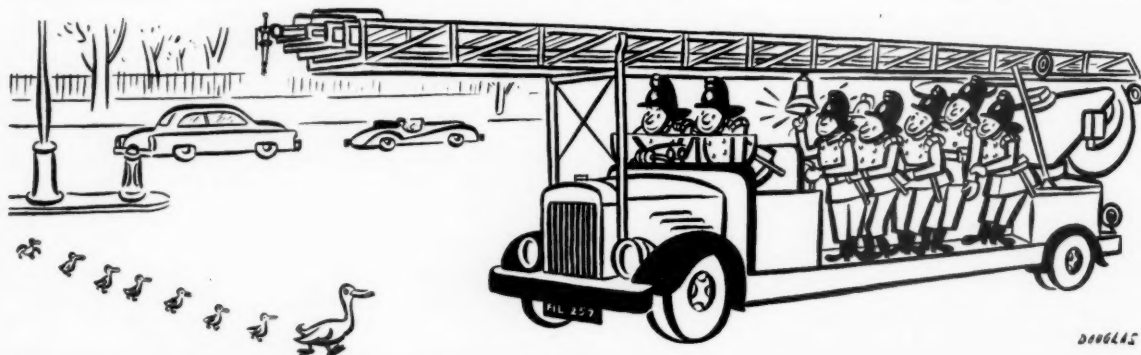
The conference was woefully devoid of balance. It began with long and involved speeches on the subject of Russia's agricultural aspirations, the kind of thing that one avoids reading—because they are so patently speculative and perhaps insincere—in the heavier weekly reviews. We were told that the U.S.S.R. was catching up on the West very rapidly, that 1956 had been a mixed year for grain—poor in the Ukraine but better in the vast unpronounceable territories of Russia-beyond-the-Urals. Milk was doing fine. So was butter. Cow meat was a problem though. And at this point there was a picturesque mention of Britain. Mr. K. had obviously been impressed by the bacon served up for breakfast at Claridges

and he now opined that the shortfall in beef production might be made good calorifically by increased production of bacon à la Grande Bretagne.

Chloe Gibson's (B.B.C.) production of the old favourite *Hindle Wakes* stood up very well to the social transmogrification wrought by the Welfare State and full employment—so much so that the Edwardian costumes were hardly necessary. In Lancashire brass is still brass, Blackpool is still Blackpool, and rumour of an illicit week-end still sets the weavers tittering.

Edward Chapman was very much at home in the part of Nathaniel Jeffercote, and was admirably supported by Billy Whitelaw, Robert Shaw, David Bird, Beatrice Varley and Bee Duffell. There were some decidedly odd attempts to get on speaking terms with the Lancashire accent. Otherwise most enjoyable.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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